

IF I STAY

By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



If I Stay is a film that asks a very existential question: What would I do if my family was to be suddenly and permanently taken away from me, and I had to face the world on my own. How would I face the choice on whether to fight to live or choose to die? What would my decision be, and why would I choose one over the other? As an adult who has dealt with many losses over the years, it might be difficult but not impossible. As a teenager, however, I could imagine just how much more painful those losses would be and how much harder it would be to deal with them.

If I Stay is also a first love story that addresses the teen angst of being in a relationship and the challenges that naturally occur when two seemingly opposites attract. Although the story is geared to appeal to a younger audience, there is a lot for adults to learn from watching the sparks fly between Chloe Grace Moretz and Jaime Blackley as two socially struggling teens that are better together than they could ever be separately. Loving another person is always a lesson on how to love ourselves. It can also be the best or the worst of times.

If I Stay is also an invitation to resilience. When you have supportive people in your environment, good friends and a loving person who understands your needs, trauma and tragedy can be overcome. So many of our young people suffer great losses in life and don't have the emotional resources, support or ability to move on or move forward. Identifying a support system and helping youth navigate life is a task that belongs to the family. But when the family is destroyed, absent or just not able to give teens what they need to survive in life, it becomes a more daunting task just to make it through each day.

If I Stay makes good use of the flashback. A life review is filled with memories, both good and painful. The movie illustrates just what is important in our lives. Reviews I have read of *If I Stay* report that the movie was not as good as the book. I wouldn't know, but I can say that you should take a few tissues with you if you decide to see it. If you have ever felt the tearing of the heart when a relative dies suddenly, this film has

something to offer. It is a good date movie as it is a good topic for conversation, discussion or debate.

I give *If I Stay* four sign posts. What would you choose?

